

P378 R35  
1900z

Random Observations  
of  
An Idle Mind



60<sup>52</sup>







## Random Observations





Random Observations  
of  
An Idle Mind

WHILE CONTEMPLATING  
AN OPEN FIRE

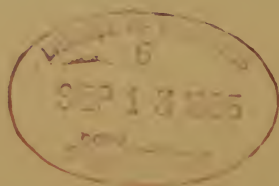
Edward Selden Spaulding

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*Selden Seuling*

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To my son  
SELDEN SPAULDING  
with affection



## THE OAK ON PIGEON HILL

The oak that for a hundred winters stood  
On Pigeon Hill and from the wild wind-  
    race,

The rain, the sunshine, gathered strength  
    and grace

To rise the titan of the neighborhood

Has been reduced at last to corded wood  
And burns within the big, stone fireplace.  
I feel its genial warmth upon my face  
Like summer sunshine, comforting and  
    good.

Outdoors, the Winter's heavy, driven rain  
Falls slashing downward through the  
    stormwracked trees  
And knuckles angrily on roof and pane.

A wild, wild night without! Within at ease  
I stretch my sleepy length and dream  
    again  
Of happy hours spent at the great oak's  
    knees.



## THE FIRST HEAVY RAIN

After the months of desiccating heat,  
When all creation cried aloud in vain  
For some relief, the sound of the first rain  
On field and hill, the heavy, steady beat

Of the big drops on roof and wall, is sweet,  
More sweet by far than the inspiring strain  
That Orpheus sang on Thessally's fair  
plain

To launch full-manned the Argonauts' vast  
fleet.

Deep in their cells the mariposas feel  
The waking pulse, the seeping moistures  
bring  
Life to the withered grasses. Soon will steal

From out the ground the tiny blades to sing  
Their tiny hymns of thanks, while small  
bells peal  
To the new world the wond'rous joys of  
Spring.



FALL STEADILY, WELCOME RAIN!

Fall steadily, oh welcome Rain, and beat  
Your sharp tattoo on every upturned face.  
Fill pore and crack and crevice, every  
space  
Within the Earth's great cisterns with your  
sweet,

Reviving fluid, till the springs, replete,  
Well up abundantly, the streamlets race  
Down the green mountainside at tumbling  
pace,  
And the long drought is brok'n in wild  
defeat.

Fall steadily, oh Rain, and drop by drop  
Wash clean each parched and dusty tree  
and bush.  
Quench the fierce thirst in every throat,  
nor stop

Your joyous ministrations till the thrush  
Sings in his bower, the finch from the  
treetop,  
And unseen larks from meadows green and  
lush.





## GOOD OAK FIREWOOD

Strength gathered from the tempest's  
    furious might,  
Warmth from the frost, and comfort from  
    the wind,  
And stored, God's providence to human  
    kind  
Through all the centuries of doubt and  
    fright

When in the little hemispheres of light  
Close to the flames Man crouched, and all  
    behind  
Him was a region vast and ill defined  
Where prowled the creatures of the horrid  
    Night.

Security and home since time began  
For us the blazing hearth has ever been.  
I stare into the flames and try to span

The gulf that stretches, phantom filled,  
    between  
That which I know because I am a man  
And what I feel, the seen and the unseen.



## MISSION PINE MOUNTAIN

These winter months, the hills lie deep  
    in snow,  
Each slope and buttress, ridge, and lifting  
    crest,  
There once in milder days we went in  
    quest  
Of the elusive buck, whose antlered brow  
  
Was there supreme, magnificent; and now  
Fierce winds, like arctic wolves that know  
    no rest,  
Rush through the forest isles, that we  
    possessed,  
To sweep them clean of creatures whom  
    we know.

Lost is our hunter's camp beneath the  
    drift  
And buried deep the well remembered  
    trail  
Down to the spring where primroses did  
    lift

Their lips to ours, and families of quail  
Were shadow patterns that did change and  
    shift  
As they loafed in to drink in that still vale.



## FIRE DREAMS

What memories within the flames are  
    scrolled!  
How skillfully they lead my thoughts  
    away  
To wander through the scenes of yesterday  
With boyhood friends in pleasures  
    manifold.

Along its path this spinning world hath  
    rolled  
As much I loved has fallen to decay;  
Yet in the ruddy flames these hours of play  
And pleasure past seem as they were of old.

Held in a light, hypnotic dream, I see  
Again the mighty walls of Zion build  
And many a sheer, unspoiled Yosemite

With trees and sunshine and gay  
    wildflowers filled.  
And there is many a face to welcome me  
Whose valiant heart long years ago was  
    stilled.



IN MEMORY OF GEORGE ROPER

Ah, George, upon what distant, pleasant  
shore

Do you now walk beneath the broad-leaved  
trees,

Hearing the warblers sing their melodies,  
From the green sprays, oft stopping to  
explore

The likely tangles? Th'all devouring war  
Is over now, the doubtful victories  
Are won, the victors home, and overseas  
Lie those who fought and will return no  
more.

When this, my fire, burns out, this warm  
glow fades  
To ashes, what remains for me and you  
And those bright days upon the Palisades

When hearts always were gay and skies  
were blue,  
When small adventures lurked in all the  
glades,  
And all we touched and saw was young and  
new?





## THERE IS NO TURNING BACK

Much though we wish it, we may not  
return  
To live again days vanished years ago  
With those gay, boyhood friends we used  
to know  
And hold in such affectionate concern.

We go to the loved spot only to learn  
Afresh that friends have passed, the  
hearth's warm glow  
Has dimmed and died, the stones are cold  
as snow.  
The fire will not rekindle, will not burn.

Although the present moments to us seem  
So commonplace, so filled with strain and  
stress,  
It may be in the future we shall dream

Of them also with warmth and tenderness.  
In retrospect, they may hold the supreme  
Benevolence our lives will e'er express.



## ON PIGEON HILL

Each spring on oak-grown Pigeon Hill  
the sun  
Beats warmly down, the big, gray pigeons  
fly  
At meteor speed, like arrows, through the  
sky;  
While in the stands of dodecatheon

And buttercup the chipmunks frisk and run  
Like little children, venturesome yet shy.  
They keep sharp watch and flick their tails  
and cry  
At everything that moves on the Rincon.

But now in winter when the rough storms  
sweep  
In from the sea, how do these wildlings  
fare?  
How coldly must the merry fellows sleep

Each in his den! There are no fires there  
To comfort them until the warm days  
creep  
Up from the South and Spring is  
everywhere.



## THE PAST IS DEAD

The past, the frightful past, seems almost  
dead.

No longer do the superstitious fears  
And eerie forms from the primordial years  
Creep through the darkness to surround  
my bed.

Around me now the night is tenented  
With mortal shapes akin to mine. One  
hears  
And smiles when wild coyotes sing of tears  
And love to the round moon high overhead.

How pleasantly, abroad at stars' first peep,  
I walk along the old, familiar trail  
That leads through trees where little  
screechowls keep

Their great-eyed watch down to the grassy  
swail  
Where Evening Primroses in clusters deep  
Follow the moon with fragile faces pale.



## THE EVENING PRIMROSE

In the soft light, while other flowers sleep  
In deep repose upon the mountainside,  
The Evening Primrose spreads its petals  
wide

To the full moon. There by the little seep

Of water do the yellow blossoms keep  
Their nightly trysts with all the shy,  
wide-eyed,  
Crepescular fraternity that hide  
Through the hot noon within the thickets  
deep.

Bloom on, fair spirits of the soft half-light,  
And show your beauty only to the eyes  
Of those who love, like you, the moonlit  
night;

Who know the wonder of the starry skies,  
The sadness of the Day's reluctant flight,  
The spreading glory of each new sunrise.





## THE PLEASANT NIGHT

So many of God's creatures shun the bright  
Noon hours and choose instead the darkness  
clear

For their pursuits and pleasures! Timid  
deer

Come out to browse in the soft quarter-  
light,

Birds set the moonrise as a time for flight,  
While on the surface of the ocean queer,  
Unsignally fish from darkest depths appear  
And leap with all their strength into the  
night.

And Man, no less than fish and bird, enjoys  
The quiet darkness as he makes his bed  
Beneath the stars, far from the madd'ning  
noise

Of hard-paved, city streets. There was he  
bred.

The lively talents that he now employs  
Were formed there, and there were  
inherited.



## FEAR OF THE DARK

Instinctively all children fear the Dark,  
Not for itself, for what it may contain  
Of eerie forms that they can not explain  
Because they have not seen or touched  
them. "Hark!

"What was it?" Centuries of terror stark  
When almost helpless Man has crouched  
or lain  
Close by his fire, or has been chased amain,  
Have left their ineradicable mark.

But as the children grow to manhood, less  
And less they feel of instinct, more and  
more  
They turn to reason for their happiness.

The ancient fear, the ancient, thoughtless  
lore,  
Fade steadily till only dreams impress  
The load of terror that the Race once bore.



## THE CALIFORNIA WOODPECKER

Eight months ago, as reckoned by the  
    moon,  
Within the great oak's shade at rest I lay  
And watched the hard-billed woodpeckers  
    at play  
Above me all the lazy afternoon.

Moved by the welling joys of early June,  
They went from tree to tree, from spray to  
    spray,  
In undulating flight, so free, so gay,  
They seemed each one a flickering festoon.

Gay birds, so carefree yet so provident,  
How many weary wingbeats did you roam  
After that day our heartless axes sent

You forth to find another shelt'ring dome  
Within whose center you could feel content  
To chisel out a second fortress home?



## A FLAG ON IWO

Far out in the Pacific, on a height  
Of sulph'rous Iwo, fighters battlescarred  
Have raised the flag, thrusting the staff  
    end hard  
Down in the smoking scoria while the  
    fight

Still swirled and eddied round them, left  
    and right.  
There on that barren cone, full striped  
    and starred,  
The Banner took the breeze, and oceanward  
Our sailors saw and cheered its colors  
    bright.

How many other men in other lands  
Have lifted high that flag, have rallied  
    there!  
What desperate, what sometimes hopeless,  
    stands

Have there been made; for men will ever  
    dare  
To rally when a leader in his hands  
Seizes the Flag and lifts it high in air!





## THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Into the maelstrom of this awful war  
We send our sons to fight like savage dogs:  
In the South Seas, in fever-ridden bogs  
And swamps, on deserts waterless; high o'er

White, wave-washed atoll, and on coral  
    shore  
Rich only in its mass of tortured logs  
And shattered ships; in northern fogs,  
On rotten muskeg and wild, worthless tor.

Beget, ye fathers and ye mothers, sons  
In never ending numbers to supply  
Brave, human targets for the bombs and  
    guns;

For War is in the saddle and doth cry  
Us ever onward. Coward he who shuns  
The battle front and has no wish to die!



## THE FAIR DEAL

In every issue of the daily news  
Comes sordid tales of politics and graft,  
Malfeasance in high office. Men have  
    laughed  
At the old faiths and standards. Gangs  
    and Crews

Have formed and have by strategym and  
    ruse  
And shakedown reaped the harvest of their  
    craft,  
Have dealt in millions while their victims  
    chaffed  
At the injustice but dared not refuse.

Preferment now is for those talented  
In party politics. The wise and just,  
Whom Washington respected, the well bred

Of Adams presidency, these are thrust  
From public place; yet Grover Cleveland  
    said:

“A public office is a public trust.”



## THIS SENSELESS WAR

Woe unto him who calls young men to die  
Far from their homes upon some unknown  
strand

In an adventure that is badly planned,  
An enterprise that none can justify,

That has no just conclusion. Bodies lie  
In bundles pitiful on the wet sand  
And roll this way and that at the command  
Of the salt waves and the wild seabird's  
cry.

Woe to the man who summons such a host  
To slaughter. Woe to this great nation.  
When

At war's end the incalculable cost

In time and treasure and in shattered men  
Is totalled up, and all that we have lost  
Confronts us, what shall we in truth say  
then?



## SO MANY VOICES

Far, far away, among Korean hills,  
Our men are shot by hundreds every day.  
This battleground is much too far away  
For us to think oft of it though it kills

And maims our sons. Our own domestic  
ills

Fill all our minds. While politicians say  
That all is well, we in our homes inveigh  
Against corruption and the huge tax bills.

So many selfish parties, faiths, and creeds!  
So many priests whose pratings never  
cease!

So many bullfrogs in the marshy meads

Who croak the whole night through! So  
many geese

Who gabble always! What this country  
needs

Is one wise leader who will bring us peace.





## A POSSIBLE EXPLANATION

When God created Adam long ago,  
He made him in God's image, which must  
mean  
That Man was made a spirit and, I ween,  
Might walk and talk with God at sunset's  
glow.

Earthy he was, too, of the dirt; and so  
A creature of the fields and hillsides green,  
As are the bear and deer; one who must  
glean  
For food and all brute needs and passions  
know.

Now, sons of Adam, far from Eden, raise  
Their hands and eyes to Heav'n as they  
adore  
Their Maker. Loud they chant their songs  
in praise

Of Him as they go off to work and war  
As ruthless as the beasts. Each hacks and  
slays,  
And then, returning, worships God once  
more.



## YOUTH AND SPEED

As in the past, youth must be served by  
speed.

Though time is not one of their pressing  
cares,

For many years of life may well be their's,  
Still must they drive as Jehu drove, nor  
heed

The frightful risk to life the modern steed  
Subjects them to. The charioteer who  
dares

The most upon the concrete thoroughfares  
Is rated first among them by this creed.

Old men, whose time upon this earth is  
short,

For whom the numbered days pass quickly  
by,

These think it mad that anyone should  
court

Death in such fashion. In their seasoned  
eye,

Such breakneck recklessness is a fool's sport  
For all too soon there comes the time to die.



## GOOD BREEDING AND THE LACK OF IT

Is there today a maiden anywhere  
So fair in face and form as they who look  
Out of the pages of an old-time book,  
For whom the young swains did so greatly  
dare?

Sweet, lovely Lorna, of the raven hair,  
To me seems perfect by her wild, Doone  
brook;  
And Catriona — The Balfour forsook,  
Of course, all others for a lass so fair.

Such goodness, gentle, disciplined, is  
found  
But seldom, for upon our streets now swirl  
Excited groups and free, the uncouth sound  
Of the loud, banal laughter that the churl  
Did use; and license in hard lines is ground  
Deep in the features of the modern girl.



## THE RAINBOW

In childhood, when the earth seemed  
    clothed in rain,  
And I was forced, indoors, to keep me dry,  
I would grow weary and would sigh and  
    cry  
To walk the open fields and hills again.

Then might my Mother, pointing through  
    the pane,  
Show me a rainbow building in the sky,  
And tell me of the pots of gold that lie  
At rainbow's end out on the grassy plain.

How now, when skies are dark with the  
    thick storm  
And life moves slowly on the sodden mould,  
Will Iris, laughing, show her lovely form

And call me to her, as her wont of old,  
Out where the unobstructed sun shines  
    warm  
And sparkles on the heaps of yellow gold?





## A SMALL BOY IN A DUCK BLIND

At dawn I crouched with wonder in a  
    blind,  
A little boy for whom the stars were  
    bright,  
And on the eastern skyline saw the light  
Of the new day just visible. The wind  
  
Came drifting o'er the marshland  
    many-tined  
With cold, sharp barbs. Beyond my sight  
In the damp darkness, I could hear the  
    flight  
Of great and lesser flocks of the duckkind.  
  
"Whee-whee-whee-whee-whee-whee", the  
    duck wings said.  
Then came the deep, hoarse croak, the  
    ghoulish cry,  
Of the night heron, flying overhead.  
  
Then other eerie sounds from passers by  
Unknown, unseen, wraiths of the marshland  
    dread,  
Toward which I stared, low-crouched,  
    with fearful eye.



## TWO CHILDREN

In the old, sun-drenched city, indolent  
By a tradition dear to everyone,  
Two children spent their summers having  
    fun  
In simple ways. Each pleasant day they  
    went

Down to the shore and on the hot sand  
    spent  
Their timeless mornings, swimming in  
    the sun,  
Hearing the sound of crashing breakers  
    run  
Along the beach, and therewith were  
    content.

How often at Diehl's fountain did they  
    meet,  
After the sets of tennis all aglow,  
For a cold sundae, tantalizing, sweet,  
  
Delicious. (How can older people know  
How good it was to them!) Ah, Margaret;  
These children lived so very long ago!



## THE GOOD OLD DAYS

Long, long ago, in the Old Spanish Days,  
When don and doña saw the warm hours  
pass

So lazily, with no clock to harass  
Them in their cool adobes; when the frays

In cloistered missions, where the sun's hot  
rays

Were turned to brilliant shafts by the  
stained glass,

In quiet reverance celebrated mass;  
When swart vaqueros watched the cattle  
graze —

In what warm, cheerful colors now appears  
The long past scene! The never varied  
food,

The long, drab days, the cruelties, the fears,

The sicknesses so little understood,  
Have been forgotten in the passing years,  
And what is now recalled seems very good.



## GONE IS MY YOUTH

Where is the youth that once was surely  
mine,  
The easy, ready strength that took me far  
Across the Santa Ynez to Alamar  
And on to the Sierra timberline?

Where is the youthful zest that let  
me dine  
On half cooked beans and trout by crag  
and scar,  
That made my blankets soft on grav'llly bar  
And ledge, and pleasant in the cold  
starshine?

Where is the wonder that I once possessed?  
Last night I needed desperately the brawn,  
The strength I took for granted, and the  
zest

That held me spellbound as the flaming  
dawn  
Painted with splendor the high, granite  
crest, —  
I called upon them all—but they were  
gone.





## IN RETROSPECT

Much did I labor in my youth for gain  
In that good cause and this new enterprise  
Of promise, and I thought thereby to rise  
To greater usefulness, to a domain

Of influence and power. Young hopes soon  
    wane  
And early promises materialize  
So very slowly, if at all! Hope dies  
And, dying, cries that all such work is  
    vain.

Oh God, our Father, Who alone can  
    know  
All that is purposed in the human heart,  
Grant me the wisdom to believe that  
    though

The whole was not achieved, some little  
    part  
Has been for good, and it will live and  
    grow  
And so fulfill the promise of its start.



## WE DIE WITH OUR FRIENDS

As the years pass and one by one my friends  
Return to that far country whence they  
came,

My life goes forward, seemingly the same  
As ever it has been: the deep hurt mends,

Suns rise and set, each bitter season ends,  
I still am I, older, perhaps, and lame  
In outward form; but inwardly the flame  
Of life still burns and a good heat pretends.

This much I know: each time an old friend  
dies

A part of me dies with him, and I go  
With him to Sheol. Would that I were  
wise

Enough, because of this descent, to know  
That part of him still looks out through  
my eyes,  
Speaks with my voice, and does whate'er  
I do.



## CHRISTMAS

When Winter gripped with its hard, icy  
hand  
The Baltic world and nights both cold and  
long  
Grew ever longer, they who lived among  
The gloomy, northern firs and spruces  
planned

A festival that day the sun would stand  
At its low point at noon. With muttered  
song  
And pray'r they held their rites before a  
strong  
And lusty sapling in that pagan land.

Now Christian folk in every continent and  
clime  
About the world, wherever they may be,  
And though the fields and glades are white  
with rime

Or green with grass, they trim the  
Christmas Tree  
With love. Ah, Christmas was a merry  
time.  
Hearth, home, and friends, and my own  
family!



## FEAR IN THE NIGHT

When sickness comes in the black night  
and pain  
With fever high to one whom we hold  
dear,  
Then long the hours grow, great is the fear  
That grips our hearts. How anxiously  
again

And yet again I search the sky in vain  
For some faint sign to tell that dawn is  
near,  
When the hope-giving sunlight will appear  
To drive off darkness and its evil train

Of doubt, disease, and fear, and death and  
sin.

Our children are so helpless as they lie  
In their white covers, carefully tucked in

By prayerful hands! The thought that one  
might die

So young is monstrous. Surely we will win  
This present fight with Earth's great  
Mystery!





## HOME

From the security that we have made  
For them our children go, young, confident  
In their resilient strength, and all intent  
On youth's absorbing problems. So we bade

Our families farewell and unafraid  
Went forth together long ago. Consent  
We must now cheerfully as we invent  
New duties, lest we feel ourselves  
betrayed.

Oh God, our Father; where-so-e'er are  
cast  
Our lots, however scattered we become,  
Keep in our hearts warm memories of the  
past

And of each other. As we widely roam  
Or wilfully, curve Thou all paths at last  
So that, as dusk falls, they shall lead us  
Home.



## NATURES WAGES

The wages Nature pays are not in gold  
Or silver for the idle hours spent  
In quiet vales and canyons redolent  
Of flowers and trees and running water  
cold

And noisy, but are in another metal old  
As Eden, where at dusk the First Man  
went  
To walk with God by the magnificent  
Euphrates, deep and wide and uncontrolled.

We wait in quietness upon the floor  
Of some still canyon. In the warm  
half-light  
Between the alders and the sycamore

That canopy the stream we watch the Night  
Steal softly in upon us, and a door  
To Heaven opens as we pray for sight.



## THE MIGRATION OF BIRDS

When geese fly high and humble sparrows  
go

From bush to bush across the continent,  
What force is it, what impulse, that has  
sent

These travellers forth o'er land and sea,  
o'er snow

And sand, toward distant goals they can  
not know,

At best can sense but dimly, confident  
That journey's end will come ere strength  
is spent

With rest and food and shelter there also?

So fly the birds, stout-hearted, undeterred  
By threat of storm or distance, without sign  
Or chart to guide them, only deeply  
stirred

By the Great Impulse. Would their faith  
were mine!

Then need I never falter, for the Word  
Would guide me surely to the House  
Divine.



## THE CHRONOMETER OF GOD

The great clock strikes the moment and the  
chime,  
Although but faintly heard by urban man,  
The swallow deep in far off Yucatan  
Hears clear and changes course. In every  
clime

The waterfowl and waders with sublime  
Concurrence, sandpipers and long necked  
swan,  
Ascend their spiral ways and in the van  
Drive hard to keep the rendezvous on time.

Across the land runs the compelling word.  
Trees don new leaves, great rivers rise in  
flood,  
Warm breezes blow, and everywhere is  
heard

The pulsing chorus sung by transient sod,  
Enduring rock, and flower and beast and  
bird - - -  
All at the stroke of the Great Clock of  
God.





## LATE FALL ON THE MARSHES

The fast-winged ducks across the heavens  
drive

In wisps and skeins and undulating bands,  
The shrilling plovers swing across the  
sands

And muds of beach and marsh and lift and  
dive

In unison, the lobe-toed mudhens give  
To sloughs a voice, the lanky heron stands  
In the still waters of the reedy ponds  
So still it hardly seems to be alive!

Although this is the last of the long year,  
Though leaves have fallen and though  
trees stand bare,  
Wild life is pulsing fast on marsh and mere,

And strident voices everywhere declare  
Of far off, sunny shores and waters clear  
And high, romantic journeys through the  
air.



## THE PATH TO PARADISE

There are town-tired folk who wish that  
they  
Might take some quiet trail that winds  
among  
The pine clad mountains, where the  
chorused song  
Of birds is heard at the first peep of day

And flower masses point for them the way  
To Paradise. Ho, brothers; come along  
With me. I know of granite summits strong  
And high, and icy streams that plash and  
play.

For I have trod this Path to Paradise,  
Which wanders through the dewy  
meadowgrass,  
Beneath the shade filled trees, by streams  
that rise

In the high snows, and through the  
flower mass;  
Where fairy lanterns guide my tired eyes  
And tiny bells ring sweetly as I pass.



## MOUNTAIN QUAIL

High on the tow'ring ridge the red flanked  
quail

Glean leisurely beneath the chaparral  
That clothes as with a robe the mountain  
wall.

Forward they go by tiny path and trail,

One here, one there, one scratching in the  
shale

Like any barnyard hen for seeds that fall  
From the brush canopy; while others call  
Their pleasant greetings, far across the  
vale.

"Whou. Whou," they say. The soft yet  
clear sound floats  
On the still mountain air and fades away.  
I hear the calls but can not see the throats,

The graceful plumes, or swelling breasts  
of gray.

After a silence comes again the notes:

"Whou. Whou." And then once more,  
"whou, whou," they say.



AT THE GENERAL SHERMAN TREE

Crowning the rugged slopes, the huge  
trees lift

Their massive heads in strength; and  
century

By slowly passing century they see  
The seasons come and go, the snows pile  
drift

On drift as white flakes, soft and noiseless,  
sift

Down through the sprays; and then, how  
pleasantly,

The warm sun shines to melt the snow and  
free

The forests and the river waters swift.

When Franklin searched the clouds for  
lightning, when

John signed at Runnymede the Charter  
Great,

When youthful Alexander led his men

To the far Indus — at that early date  
This mighty tree stood in this western glen  
Youthful and tall and strong, immaculate.





## SUNSET ROCK

We sat on Sunset Rock and saw the Day  
Fade slowly into Night, the darkness deep  
And formless up Kaweah Canyon creep.  
Beyond the tree-crowned ridge, far, far  
away,

The unseen sun continued its display  
Of light; but round us on the hillside  
steep  
The creature world prepared itself for  
sleep  
In the tall trees and on the granite gray.

Ah, sad, so very sad, it seemed to see  
That brave day pass for aye! A shad'wy  
spell  
Lay on our hearts, and somewhat solemnly

Our thought o'erleaped the present night  
to dwell  
On that time, inescapable, when we  
Also to this bright world should say  
farewell.



## THE POET'S INSPIRATION

Wordsworth and Keats, where do such men  
acquire

Their golden competency, where the art  
That does to dull, dead, leaden words  
impart

Life, charm, and motion, and a subtle fire

To catch the soul and lift it high and higher  
Above the earthy cares that burn and  
smart

Up to the birds who, with untroubled heart,  
Sing in the blue, atop the old church spire.

I feel the ache that every sunset brings,  
When length'ning shadows climb the  
canyon wall;

When Evening comes on silvery, silent  
wings

And small birds in the bushes flirt and call.  
There in the dusk, when all creation sings,  
I must stand mute. I can not sing at all.



## THE HILLS IN AUTUMN

Oh, I have climbed up from the canyon  
floor

By a steep, breathless trail in the clear,  
still,

Cold, autumn dawn. There was no  
wren's trill,

No thrasher's song; but a great hawk did  
soar

And swing up from the creek-bound  
sycamore

Into the heavens, free and high o'er hill  
And dale. I heard its screaming, wild and  
shrill,

Fierce as the heart of the bold predator.

And I have felt the fall breeze, moving  
cold

And biting, flowing as a great air tide,  
Fing'ring the dry, brown leaves in cleft  
and fold,

And whisp'ring urgently: "Hide, children;  
hide

"Deep in the shelter of the fragrant mould.

"Oh, hurry down from this high  
mountainside."



## THE BEAUTIFUL TREES

How lovely are the trees, which God hath  
made

To grace their several stations. By the  
streams,

In the deep canyons, the tall Alder dreams  
Of sunny days and reaches wide to shade

The quiet, trouty pools; lithe Willows  
wade

In the cold, running water. In the seams  
And on the shoulders, pine and redwood  
teams

Climb high in grove and stately colonnade.

And out upon the desert's arid face,  
Where drought and heat and cold go hand  
in hand,

The Smoke Tree lifts, exquisite in its lace-

Like foliage, the darling of that land.

Each tree in its peculiar niche and place,  
As the all-wise Creator for them planned.





## A STILL AND SILENT SEA

Once have I swum in warm, pacific seas,  
When overhead the brilliant sky was blue  
And underneath the sea was sapphire, too;  
And there was not the slightest breath or  
breeze

To ripple the still surface. There at ease  
I swam and played, and neither cared nor  
knew

What said the clock the carefree morning  
through.

Sunshine, warm seas, and idle vagaries!

Like some huge pond that stretched from  
east to west,

No swell there was to roll in on the shore  
And, toppling forward all along its crest,

To crash upon the sand with pounding roar.  
A strange contentment held the deep at rest.  
Silence there was the wide Pacific o'er.



## HALF ASLEEP AMONG THE SAND DUNES

Of have I lain upon the sunbaked sand  
After an hour's exhilarating fun  
In the rough, boisterous surf, and felt the  
sun

Hot on my back and shoulder deeply tanned

By hours of lying. The salt breeze has  
fanned

My cheek as I have let my vagrant, half-  
thoughts run

With vagrant wind and wave from horizon  
To far horizon on the curving strand.

Oh, I have lain among the white sand  
dunes,

So lazily, so drowsily, so free  
Of urban things, and heard the world-old  
runes

Sung by the deep voiced waves  
monotonously;

The rise and fall and rise of endless tunes  
Rhythmic with wisdom from the sleepy sea.



## TUMACACORI

The church at Tumacacori now stands  
An empty, roofless shell. The heavy doors,  
Which held at bay through countless feuds  
and wars

The savage furies of the Indian bands,

Long since have given way; and greedy  
hands

Have stripped the Mission of its sacred  
stores,

Have even dug beneath the once cool floors  
For fabled treasure in these sterile sands.

In spite of the unpard'nable neglect,  
The wastage of each careless, vandal year,  
Still do the heavy walls and tower reflect

The staunchness of the men who labored  
here

To snatch brands from the burning and who  
recked

Not cost. Brave men, devoted and sincere!



## THE NEW JERUSALEM

Deep in a land, whose rocks are red as  
blood,

A small stream runs between the walls  
that rise

Sheer, bare, and bold to meet the sapphire  
skies.

Here in an emerald grove of cottonwood

Once Brigham Young, the Mormon  
Leader, stood

With his bold partisans. In awed surprise  
He named the canyon "Zion", "Paradise",  
Where men might worship God in thankful  
mood.

Though we who come so easily through  
drought

And heat and barren wastes of rock and  
sand

Can not but feel within us surging doubt

Of it, the weary, travel-hardened band  
Cheered Brigham when he cried, with  
courage stout:

"This is the Place. This is the Promised  
Land."





## THE PTARMIGAN

High on the mountaintop, where banks  
    of snow  
Lie all year long, where on the talus slide  
The Conies cry their shrill alarms and hide  
Secure when cold, snow-laden, storm-  
    winds blow,

Too high by far for pine or spruce to grow,  
The Gentle White-tailed Ptarmigan  
    reside  
In undisturbed contentment, well  
    supplied  
With all those needs their simple natures  
    know.

We climbed the alpine steep to the last  
    hill  
(whose rocky top was almost three miles  
    high)  
One day in summer. Then the wind blew  
    chill

As ominous, black clouds obscured the  
    sky;  
And there the Ptarmigan, unruffled, still,  
Watched our approach with unconcernéd  
    eye.



## TWO PATHS TO WEALTH

Two paths to splendid wealth there are,  
it seems.

The one that Croesus trod long years ago,  
Whose golden milestones cast so rich a glow  
That every page of history still gleams

Auriferously. Since then, the base man's  
schemes  
Have been of wealth to equal to this; and  
no  
Slight chance has been too grim, no crime  
too low,  
If it but promised wealth to match their  
dreams.

The second is that of the Ptarmigan,  
Whose wants are simple and whose needs  
are few:  
High mountain sides and tops from which  
to scan

Sunrise and sunset gold, a lake or two  
To mirror the bright sky with partisan  
Delight, and pastures fresh with rain and  
dew.



## THE MARMOT AND THE CONY

The mysteries of life are very great  
And quite beyond our powers to devise  
The answers. Marmots of impressive size,  
Fat, shaggy fellows, when the year grows  
late,

Retreat into the dens they excavate.  
Deeply they sleep as high the snowdrifts  
rise  
Above their heads and moistures crystalize  
To ice around them. Thus they hibernate.

The Cony, tiny yet stout hearted sprite  
Of the high rock slides, spends his sunlit  
day

In preparation for the long, cold night.

Hour after hour he cuts and cures his hay;  
And when the snowdrifts cover him up  
tight,  
Secure he feasts on stores he cut in May.



## FOUR CHAMBERS OF THE HEART

Four chambers are there in the good man's  
heart:

A workshop where the laborer can lean  
Over his workbench and with interest keen,  
Sharp eye, and firm, sure hand perform  
his part,

However sized, of this world's work. An  
Art

Museum for the wonders he has seen  
And heard and read of, articles that mean  
Beauty and Joy, perhaps some Way or  
Chart

Of Life from ancient Babylon, a gum  
From the old Nile used in a cult divine  
And fragrant still. A large gymnasium

Where he may laugh, have fun in sport, and  
dine

With boyhood friends who to his house  
have come.

The Fourth is holy, for it walls a shrine.





## PARIS MAKES HIS CHOICE

As Paris sate on Ida's sunny slopes  
And watched his woolley flocks graze  
    tranquilly  
The pungent herbs and grasses of that lea,  
He let his mind run with the fears and  
    hopes

That torment growing boys as each one  
    gropes  
His way to manhood. Wished he to be  
    free,  
Yet doubted ; might it not be best to be  
Secure though bound by strong parental  
    ropes?

Should he in time ascend his father's  
    throne,  
Have wealth and pow'r, for which all  
    princes strove?  
Should he seek Wisdom in some cell alone

On some high hill, within some sacred  
    grove?  
Or Love . . . The young man, raising,  
    flung a stone  
Into the brook and went in quest of Love.



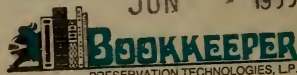






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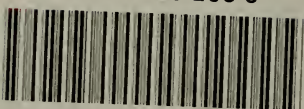
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